

JULIA
AND HER
KITTENS



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JULIA CARY

AND

HER KITTEN.

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JULIA CARY
AND
HER KITTEN.

CHAPTER I.

A SAIL.

A FINE large steamboat was sailing up the Hudson river one summer morning.

Up and down its broad decks

and pretty saloons skipped lively little Julia Cary.

“Don’t ask me to keep still, Ellen; I can’t, I am so happy,” she said.

Ellen was her nurse, who had taken loving care of Julia since she was a baby.

She kindly went to the side of the boat, whenever it was to land, so that the little girl might see a stout man ring a big bell, and other men throw ropes to

men on shore. These ran and threw the ropes over huge posts, and so held the boat fast till people went ashore. Then other people came on the boat; then the ropes were drawn back, and the boat started on again.

But Julia liked better still to wander about, holding her father's hand. He could answer all her questions about the lovely shores they sailed between. He told the names of

the villages they passed, and showed her the busy machinery that sent the boat swiftly along, far away from the hot city.

“Papa,” said Julia, “are you poor?”

“In money, child? No, no; I have more than you and I will spend.”

“And you are good, papa, and are not sick. What did that lady mean when she said, ‘Poor Julia! poor papa!’”

Mr. Cary walked quickly on, leading Julia by the hand.

Down stairs, where trunks and boxes of all kinds were piled, on their own poor luggage sat a family of German emigrants.

You would quickly call them poor. Their clothes were coarse. They were eating black bread, because they could not pay for a good dinner such as Julia and her father had.

Two little girls and one stout boy laughed and jabbered their queer talk with their mother and father. The mother held a baby on her knee—an odd-looking fat baby, with a funny cap on its head.

Mr. Cary sat down on a trunk, at a little distance from them, and lifting Julia upon his knee, he said,

“My darling will learn that she and I must be, in one way,

poor as long as we live. What has that little trot-foot got that money cannot buy for my Julia?"

Julia looked at the shiny, apple-cheeked little Dutch girl who came shyly towards her. She noticed the thin dress, the heavy shoes, the ugly net over her yellow hair. Surely, Julia bought for herself lovelier things than those.

Julia kept thinking. The

strange child too was thinking, and drew so near that she was scared at last to find herself so far from her mother. She turned and ran back. The mother held out her arm, hugged the little girl close to her heart, and kissed her between her blue eyes.

That kiss told Julia what her father meant. Laying her head upon his shoulder, she said, "I know, papa; she has her own

dear mother. But mine—*O papa!*”

Julia's tears choked back the words that might have told you her dear mother was in heaven.

Sitting there, Julia and her father felt how very poor she was in losing mother-love and care and kisses, like that which blessed those little strangers. The Germans had no house, no land—had only money enough to take them West, where they

must work hard all day, early and late. But they had *each other*.

They might tell us that life and love are God's best blessings. Health and wealth are also his rich gifts, but not so dear—oh no! oh no!



CHAPTER II.

A RIDE.

AT Catskill Mr. Cary and Julia left the boat; and Ellen, too, with her hands full of baskets, bags, and wraps.

They walked aside from the crowd on the dock, towards a man who was holding the reins of two bright bay horses.

This was uncle Benjamin.

He had left his hay-field, ten miles away, and come down to the river to welcome our travellers. Smiles and black eyes lit up his sunburnt face cheerily.

If you had been looking off from the boat to see Julia go ashore, you would have wished you too might have been lifted by his strong arms into his easy carriage.

Ellen and the baskets were next put in. Mr. Cary sprang

to the front seat, and uncle Benjamin got up beside him.

The horses started as if they were in a hurry to get through the bars of their green pasture-lot again. Away they went over the hills.

Julia thought there was no other man so good as uncle Benjamin. She thought he owned all that country, that all the calves and colts scampering about the farms they passed

belonged to him, and many an eager question she asked about what she saw.

“O uncle Benjamin!” she shouted at last, so quickly that he half stopped his horses, as he turned to hear, “have you got any kittens for me?”

“Ha! ha!” he laughed; “I thought you had dropped your hat or bag in the road. Got any kittens? Can’t say. Charley or Johnny will know.”

A few more hills were crossed, and uncle Benjamin was at home.

Aunt Abby stood smiling at the open door; but the boys met the carriage at the gate. They were in haste to see this dear little cousin who came but once a year.

Before Mr. Cary had hung up his dusty linen coat, Julia whispered,

“Papa, they *have* got kittens,

four of them. Please ask if I may have one for my own self."

Mr. Cary told aunt Abby how lonely Julia was at home without her mother; how for weeks her heart had been so sad she could hardly play at all. She was getting used to the stillness in the house, and the heartache was wearing away. But she wanted some *live* thing to play with, she said,

and hoped to take home a *real* kitten.

“Poor little motherless girl!” sighed aunt Abby.

When called to tea, Julia came in smiling, with Charley and Johnny, who had been showing her their out-door pets.

After tea, Julia led her father to the old woodhouse stairway, where there was a more lowly kind of mother-love to be seen.

A large contented-looking cat lay on the door-step, winking fearlessly at them. The cunningest of four kittens was climbing on her back. Two prettier kittens were having a frolic at her feet, while the other one sat soberly looking on. Sometimes the wild ones rolled over and over each other down the steps.

“Did you ever see such lovely, peshhus kittens, papa dear?”



“None so precious to you and this mother-cat,” her papa said, smiling to see her so pleased.

“And I can have one! all the folks say so. Now help me find out, papa, which is the bestest kitty.”

“I wish a mouse would come along; then I’d tell you which *I* think is the best,” said Charley.

“But I do n’t care ’bout my

kitty's catching mice; I only want her to play with me. She shall have milk to drink, and part of my dinner every day."

"Kittens would look prettier to me if I didn't know they would grow to be cats," Johnny said.

"Bah! yes!" said Charley. "Up on that shed, by your bedroom window—see, Julia—see that big striped cat! Johnny and I just loved him when he





was a kitten. But he kills our birds, and that we can't forgive."

Up spoke kind-hearted Johnny: "I b'lieve he's the wickedest, badest cat that meows. So many nests he has spoiled! Then the mother-birds cry and call so, we have to stop our ears. When I get a gun, I b'lieve I'll shoot you, Mr. Tom."

Johnny handled a willow-rod as if it were a gun, and pointed

it up at the big gray cat. But it did not fear him, it was up so high. Perhaps it knew nothing about guns.

“Better go to bed now, Julia. Dream about the kittens, and in the morning we will see which one we like the best.”



CHAPTER III.

CHOOSING THE KITTEN.

IN the morning two little girls, Anne and Rose, from the next farmhouse, came to ask for a kitten.

Aunt Abby said Julia must first choose her own.

The liveliest kitty had a black-and-white coat, with black cap and ears. Its clean white

face and hands and feet pleased Julia so well, that she tied her red ribbon around its neck.

Anne and Rose were just as content with the gray ones the boys gave to them.

When they went away, each carried a kitten in her arms, and each very sweetly asked Julia to come to see them.

“We will,” said aunt Abby, “to see how the kittens like their new home.”

“Come here, Papa Cary,” this kind aunt said after breakfast, when he sat under the cherry-tree reading his newspaper; “come to my kitchen-door and see a pretty picture.”

Papa went with her, and saw his Julia trying to make the kitten love her.

She had a basin of new milk, of which kitty had been drinking. Now it was purring its thanks. Julia laid her fat cheek

against its furry side to hear the purr-purring sound.

“Dear little kitty, you will love me, wont you? My dollies just lie still, and can’t love a bit. You nice, warm, live kitty, you wont let me be lonesome any more.”







CHAPTER IV.

LITTLE THIEVES.

So now there were only two kittens in aunt Abby's house.

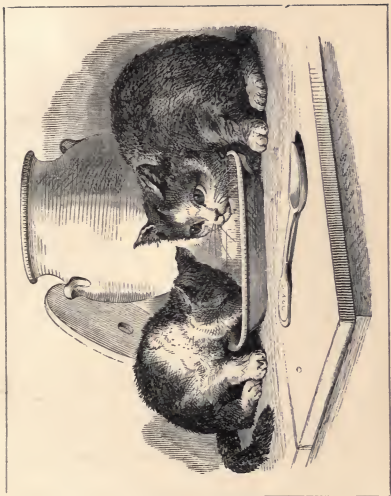
Julia found them in mischief that very day, up on the kitchen table.

Aunt Abby was getting ready to make a custard. She had gone to the pantry for some eggs, and had left the milk on

the table, and the sugar-jar uncovered. When she stepped out of the kitchen, the kittens stepped in. The flies, perhaps, had been in before.

No little boy or girl would meddle with sugar or milk left in the way; but it is hard to teach kittens that it is wrong to touch what is not theirs.

When aunt Abby and Julia came back with the eggs, the flies were stealing the sugar





and the kittens were lapping the milk from the pan.

I wonder if those kittens told their mother that Ellen gave gave each of them a rap on the ear.



CHAPTER V.

A VISIT.

ONE morning Mr. Cary and uncle Benjamin started for a long day's ride.

When her papa kissed Julia good-by, tears came in her eyes.

"My heartache will come baek again," she said.

But work is a good thing for a sad heart, and aunt Abby had

plenty of that for Julia. There were a hundred babies in feathers, out of doors, which Julia liked to feed. For breakfast, dinner, and supper, and for lunches between, Julia carried them food in a tin pail.

There were turkeys, chickens, and ducks.

When they saw aunty and Julia and the tin pail coming, they knew they should be fed. So out of the coops came chick-

ens and turkeys, peeping and chirping like little birds. And up from the little pond waddled the tiny ducks. It was fun to see how fast they came; how they tumbled down and hopped over one another in a hungry scrabble.

Aunt Abby thought Julia would not miss her dear father so much if she were with Anne and Rose. So after dinner they went to visit them.



The little girls had but few playthings, but the kitten made fun enough for them. Anne had already taught her puss to play with a string.

Before tea was quite ready for the grown folks, Anne and Rose took a box of very small dishes out on the grass, and set a table of their own. Their mamma gave them a part of each dish she had for her own guest, which made a nice feast.

They laughed and ate a great deal, and drank a great many cups of tea. But as the most of their tea came out of the milk-pitcher, and the rest from the teakettle, it did not keep either of them awake that night.

They had romped so hard, that soon after tea aunt Abby thought best for Julia to say "Good-night," and each of the little tea-drinkers was soon asleep.

Julia told her papa the next day about her good visit, and said she chased those same kittens all night. Aunt Abby said that was because she had been so wild, and had got so tired.



CHAPTER VI.

JULIA AND PUSSY GO HOME.

ONE morning Julia was riding with her uncle, when they passed Anne and Rose on their way to school. Anne's kitten had followed them so slyly, it was not seen till they were near the schoolhouse door.

Uncle Benjamin badè them teach the puss its A-B-Cs.





“Good-by!” said Julia. “I am going home to-morrow.”

Anne and Rose were sorry they could not see this dear little friend again.

The next morning, when Julia awoke, Ellen had the bags and baskets ready to take home again. No, not quite ready, for one basket was to hold the kitten, and Ellen called Julia to get up and catch it, to be in time for their journey.

Kitty seemed to know they wanted to take her away from her mother and sister pussy, and she tried to keep out of their way.

But Charley and Johnny were as cunning as she, and caught her at last.

Ellen said puss had gone in the pantry. Charley peeped in, but did not see her. He heard a stir of the paper on the shelf, and stood still at the door. He



saw a mouse leap off the shelf, and before he could hit it with his cap, it had run into a hole in the floor, and got out of the way of boy and kitten; for kitty jumped from behind the flour-barrel where she had hid, and Charley caught her.

Johnny held the basket while Charley put her in it. Then Ellen tied the cover down. Julia had put in that basket some bits of meat for kitty's lunch;

and in another she had a bottle of milk and Johnny's old tin cup, to give puss a drink while on the boat.

But before the carriage was out of the lane, the kitten was out of the basket, and everybody saw her wildly running back to the woods.

"My kitty! O my kitty! I can never go without her!" cried Julia.

"Here, Johnny!" shouted un-

cle Benjamin, as he turned his horses round, "you and Charley scamper after that kitten."

The boys leaped over the stone wall.

"But this will make us late for the boat," said Mr. Cary.

"Wont the cars do as well? I can't bear to let the little girl go without the kitten that was so 'pesshus.'"

They drove back to the shade of the willow-tree by the gate.

Aunt Abby had stood there watching them. She said if kitty did not come back soon, they must wait for her and take to-morrow's boat. But then they heard the boys shout, and soon the funny fellows came out of the woods with the runaway.

Papa Cary tied the cover this time, and puss was surely fast.

Again the loving good-bys were said under the old willow,

and Julia could not tell if she were most glad or sorry to start for home.

Kitty did not get overboard. She drank a cup of city milk—poor thing!—at bed time, beside the bed Julia and Ellen made for her in the storeroom, where, cook said, there were plenty of mice.

CHAPTER VII.

AT HOME.

JULIA loved the kitten, and the kitten loved Julia. Once more the halls rang with the little girl's merry laugh.

Puss learned some smart tricks.

Mr. Cary showed Julia how she might teach the kitten to jump through her arms.

Clasping her little hands, and holding her arms out like a hoop, she would kneel on the floor. Puss would step over her hands, held so low. Then Julia held her arms up a little; and soon the kitten could hop through this pretty hoop. By-and-by Julia could stand up, and the kitty would come when she called "Puss! puss!" and jump through her arms, which was a pretty sight.

Ellen, too, grew fond of puss, and was very kind to her. She would play with Ellen's spools of thread, and roll 'about her ball of mending-cotton, while the good nurse sat sewing with Julia beside her.

So this simple kitten, one of the humblest of God's creatures, helped to make poor motherless Julia a happy child.



